



Ministry of Defence
CHEMICAL & BIOLOGICAL DEFENCE ESTABLISHMENT

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23 November 1994

Dear *Joshua,*

SMALLPOX

1. I very much appreciated the discussion that we had on the evening of Monday 21 November 1994 when I outlined to you the discussions I had had in Washington DC with NSC (Elisa Harris), ACDS (Don Mahley), OSD (Lisa Bronson) and Health & Human Services (D A Henderson). It is clear that now is the time to reach a view on whether or not the smallpox virus should be destroyed as the majority recommendation 8/2 of the orthopox committee for destruction will be considered by the WHO Executive Committee in January 1995.
2. We had a meeting in the UK of the various Departments' involved - Health, Defence, Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at which we agreed that the UK view was that the smallpox virus should not be destroyed. I promised to send you the bullpoints identified at that meeting from which you can see (paragraphs 8 and 9) that deferment of destruction is linked to the adoption of reliable verification procedures from the Biological Weapons Convention - which is a possible solution to the enforcement point that you mentioned on the telephone.
3. Subsequent to our UK meeting we have identified a further key point relating to the possible changes in virus and in vaccine over time. This is as follows:

Test of Vaccine Efficacy

The periodic replenishment of stocks of smallpox vaccine could over a period of time result in genetic changes in the vaccine virus. An appropriate quality control procedure will be required to ensure confidence in the efficacy of such vaccine stocks. Such a procedure has not been developed and could not be developed without the use of live smallpox virus.

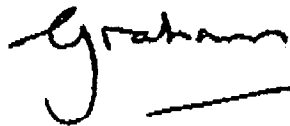
To this might be added the concern that the public acceptability of vaccinia vaccine might be significantly degraded if the vaccine would not be a licensable product today and public concern over the acceptability of the side reactions were to grow (possible parallels to the Gulf War Syndrome).

4. It would be very good if you would write to the Presidential Science Adviser as you suggested with copies to Bill Perry and the Secretary of Health and Human Services so that your views could help to shape US policy on this important issue. I would very much appreciate it if you could slip me a copy of what you write.

5. I enclose as background a copy of the draft record of the Orthopox Committee which shows (on page 15) that the decision was 8/2. It is perhaps unfortunate that the UK and US participants did not also vote against but the Committee is a group of experts rather than national representatives.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Graham", followed by a horizontal line.